

**Town of Westford
December 16, 2015 Budget Hearing**

Tree Warden

1. What effect will the \$15,000 decrease in the expense budget have on this department's performance?
If possible, what specific things will not get done because of these budget cuts?
This will affect our removal of hazardous trees. The cost of the disposal of wood products will be increasing from \$0 to approximately \$80/ton.
2. Can parks and grounds and/or highway assist if budget constraints for fy17 become an issue?
There is not extra money to assist with this. The Highway Dept has historically paid for our shortfalls, if necessary tree work must be done, from the Highway Operating budget.

Highway Department

1. Please explain the impact of the reduction of one heavy equipment operator?
This is a shared position with parks during the winter season we will need to contract out for more snow and ice operators.
2. Why is there an increase in special details?
Moved money to better reflect actual costs of Westford Police details.
3. What was last year's actual expenditures for winter on-call incentive pay?
\$23,200, we have hired 2 employees since then and need to account for all employees signing up for on-call.
4. Please explain increase in road maintenance?
We combined line items: Sand & Gravel, Road Maint Materials and Pipe & Pipe Supplies.
5. Please explain the increase from FY15 actual to Fy16/17 budget in road lines/crosswalk maintenance?
\$14,000 was taken and paid for by the states' one-time, Winter Rapid Recovery Account which included invoices that needed to be paid by 6/30/15.
6. Although there is a decrease in one heavy equipment operator in the budget, the Personnel Services budget is still increasing by \$15,641. How much of this is due to having the on-call incentive pay funded in this department and not in the Snow & Ice department?
It's the winter on call and availability stipends. In the past years, we paid this out of our snow & ice account. However, since it's a known contractual stipend, it should be budgeted. So there is \$27,600 additional funding in the stipends line item to pay for the winter call stipends out of the 421 Personal Services budget. So essentially, we can say that if we did not add in the \$25,600 for the the winter on call stipends, the personal services budget would have decreased by \$9,959.
7. A. Is the \$25,600 increase in Dept. Stipends related to on-call incentive pay or is it this and/or something else? – B. Why is the Special Details account going up by \$12,000? – C. Is the increase of \$39,000 in the Road Maintenance account related to the elimination of \$51,500 of FY16 budget in the accounts Road Maintenance Materials, Sand & Gravel and Pipe & Pipe Supplies?
A. Please see #6. B. Please see #2. C. Please see #4.
8. Why is Drainage Maintenance going up by \$8500?
Combined some of Pipe & Pipe Supplies into this account.
9. Are the special details for road maintenance? If so, road maintenance is more than double but details only increased 25%. Is that reasonable? Is the increase due to the reclassification of materials, etc?
Special (Westford Police) details are used for any road work: catch basins, beaver dams, line painting, brush cutting, etc.
10. What type and what is the life of the uniforms purchased?
The employees do not wear uniforms. This is a WPWA contract item for work related clothing.
11. What is the maintenance being done to the highway garage?
Roof repairs, garage doors, mechanical components, alarm systems, etc.
12. How do the mechanics and the vehicle maintenance relate? Are the expenses outsourced repairs that can't be handled "in house"?
We have 2 mechanics who work on 75 licensed plated vehicles. We handle as much as we can in house. Other work is outsourced by specialty. We are below the national standards for the number of mechanics to vehicles. If necessary we also assist with repairs on other town vehicles.

13. Which sidewalks are now being maintained? What was done prior to FY2017?
 We work on all sidewalks on town roads and state highways. We have always maintained sidewalks and paid for them out of our road maintenance account.
14. Is there a schedule for traffic lines? Why the big increase that now continues year to year? Would that impact special details?
 Yes, we try to have centerlines, crosswalks and stop lines painted in the spring. Yes we use special details for this work.
15. Is the dam work for Beaver Brook?
 We do not have a dam on Beaver Brook. This item is used to maintain the 3 town owned dams: Nab Dam, dam at Depot St., and dam under Broadway
16. 12.1 equipment operators are listed. Adding 3.5 from parks totals 15.6. Where is the other .4 FTE? Is it allocated to another dept? Is someone part time?
 Dan: I updated the budget to reflect the 2.9 FTE's in Parks & Grounds. Thanks for the catch!
17. What are system upgrade services in storm water mgmt? (Heather)
 Enhancements and repairs to the town's drainage system as required by our EPA permit.
18. Why the big jump in Stipends?
 Please see # 6.
19. Just to be clear, we're budgeting \$400k, but we have already allocated another \$400k from free cash to cover additional amounts.
 Dan: Yes. We currently have \$400,000 earmarked in this year an outlying years to pay for any deficits to the snow & ice budget.
20. I know we've discussed this before, but would it make sense to budget higher and then possibly have a close out instead of budgeting at a lower number that we're almost sure to exceed?
 Dan: Most communities prefer to keep the snow & ice budget as is. Once the budget is increased, it can never be decreased. Where we are at the tax levy, we would have to cut \$400,000 in other services to do this.
21. What is the lowest expense for snow & ice removal over the past 3-5 FYs?
 Dan: Please see the table below:

Fiscal Year	Amount Spent from Budget	Amount Spent in Excess of Budget (Legal Deficit)	Total Snow & Ice
2010	350,345	264,207	614,552
2011	350,345	520,905	871,250
2012	350,345	246,197	596,542
2013	350,345	370,044	720,389
2014	350,345	611,107	961,452
2015	400,000	647,965	1,047,965

22. In your opinion is Town funding for roadway improvements/maintenance keeping up with the need? How much more is needed/reasonable in your opinion?
 No and it never has, given the amount of growth, plus adding new streets to the inventory. How much more we will need should be answered by our pavement management program. It would be reasonable to cover the amount that represents: good roads, preventive maintenance, and no further deterioration of our roadway system due to not keeping up with timely repairs and improvements.